

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **REB to Test and Improve English Language Proficiency of 40,000 Teachers in February 2014**

The largest-ever survey of Rwandan teachers' English language skills is set to begin shortly. Approximately 40,000 primary and secondary school teachers will be tested this February 10-28 to determine their English language levels. The diagnostic test will be used to develop training for teachers and overall strategy, with the goal of improving English language skills. Once current levels are known, school-based mentors will set goals for each teacher's improvement throughout the year.

The test was developed by the Rwanda Education Board (REB) with the support of the USAID-funded Literacy, Language, and Learning (L3) Initiative and will be administered by REB school-based mentors. The results will inform REB's development of a long-term blended approach to English language learning, and in the meantime, will allow school-based mentors to provide teachers with targeted training in the areas most needed.

English language is of strategic importance for Rwanda's development goals and national interests and is needed for Rwanda to have a competitive edge in the regional and global economy. This is history in the making for the improvement of English language skills in Rwanda.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as well as grammar and vocabulary are included in the test, based on the Rwandan English Proficiency Standards for teachers (REPS). The REPS system, linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), has levels from 1 to 5—beginner to advanced. Since January, REB and L3 have been distributing netbook computers to the mentor, loaded with the English testing materials and training resources for different REPS levels.

The test will help teachers to know where they are now and where they need to be. Teachers are expected to work hard over the year to make big improvements, allowing them to more effectively contribute to improving the quality of education in Rwanda.

After working with school-based mentors, teachers will be tested again in September 2014 to measure their progress. From 2015, teachers will have to undergo more rigorous evaluative tests meant for certification purposes which will determine levels attained. These tests will impact on future teacher mobility, promotion, career development, transfer, dismissal, etc.